

of the Quarter," p. 119 in this issue), his contribution should materially advance the welfare of deprived children.

HILDA LEWIS.

CONTRACEPTION

Wright, Helena. *Contraceptive Technique: A handbook for Medical Practitioners and Senior Students.* London, 1951. J. & A. Churchill. Pp. 68. Price 6s.

THIS book is an all too brief summary of Dr. Helena Wright's long experience in birth-control work. She has written it to help hard-worked general practitioners who may wish to fit patients themselves. Her clear statements of the importance of family planning from the doctors' standpoint should encourage senior students to study the subject further.

The methods for fitting the various caps are described in detail with diagrams and the dosage of spermicides are discussed. There is an account of some atypical cases, and the Gräfenberg ring, the wishbone pessary and the safe period are commented on in the chapter on "Unreliable Contraceptive Methods." In classifying with these the use of sheath, or cap, or chemical, alone, proper emphasis is put on the dangers of half-hearted birth control. However, the full details of the correct use of the sheath are not given, and this is a serious omission. A short bibliography and dated lists of approved contraceptives and clinics where doctors can train would be useful additions to this book.

RACHEL CONRAD.

HUMAN BIOLOGY

Cold Spring Harbor Symposia on Quantitative Biology, Volume XV. *Origin and Evolution of Man.* New York, 1950. Biological Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor. Pp. xii + 425. Price 60s.

THE Biological Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor, New York, put us all in their debt by organizing a succession of symposia on biological subjects of topical importance.

The symposium reported in this book is an outstanding example. This conference brought together experts who have broken new ground in physical anthropology, human genetics and serology. Their contributions combine in a single book accounts of recently discovered facts and new ideas, which have hitherto been reported only in widely scattered papers.

Some of the papers will be of special interest to eugenicists. One of these is Strandskov's opening paper on the genetic mechanisms of evolution. He takes the orthodox view that evolution proceeds mainly by natural selection acting on small random mutations. "The effect is usually a slight change in allelic frequencies from one generation to the next, but if continued in one direction through countless generations the change will of course become a large one." In his conclusions he states, "Some of man's unique characteristics are affecting the usual operation of natural selection in so far as it pertains to human evolution, and are giving a direction to human evolution which is not the most favourable from a survival point of view. Man must accept his origin from some other species of primate and also his present biologic status, but he need not accept completely this present evolutionary trend. It is within his power to redirect to some extent the present and future course of his evolution." This viewpoint is not amplified in the text of his address, or discussed by other speakers.

In the section on physical anthropology, McCown and Stewart discuss the relationship of the early specimens of *Homo Sapiens* and *Homo Neanderthalensis* in the light of recent findings at Mount Carmel and at Fontéchevade; it is at any rate now clear that types of man very like ourselves coexisted with or even antedated the fully developed Neanderthaloid types. Unfortunately no one was present at the symposium with first-hand experience of the recent African discoveries, but the president of the section, Howells, describes how the form of such fossil apes as *Proconsul* and of the South African ape-men remove much of the difficulty of explaining man's origin that existed when the ape series